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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

ON PETITION

In re Application of
N'Ton Kitapini, et al.
Application No. 10/652,929
Filed: September 2, 2003
Attorney Docket No. None

This is a decision in response to the petition, filed November 13, 2007, under 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive the above-identified application.

The application file does not indicate a change of address has been filed in this case, although the address given on the petition differs from the address of record. A change of address should be filed in this case in accordance with MPEP 601.03. A courtesy copy of this decision is being mailed to the address noted on the petition. However, until otherwise instructed, all future correspondence regarding this application will be mailed solely to the address of record.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within **TWO (2) MONTHS** from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted.

The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)." This is **not** a final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 704.

A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by: (1) the required reply, unless previously filed; (2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m); (3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional; and (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required by 37 CFR 1.137(d). Where there is a question as to whether either the abandonment or the delay in filing a petition under 37 CFR 1.137 was unintentional, the Director may require additional information. See MPEP 711.03(c)(II)(C) and (D).

This petition does not comply with items (1) and (3) above.

As to item (1), the required reply: It is noted that the requisite petition fee and issue fees have been submitted; however, this petition does not include a new oath or declaration in compliance with 37 CFR 1.67(a) as required by the Supplemental Notice of Allowability mailed June 16, 2005.

As to items (3), the statement of unintentional delay: The statement of unintentional delay is not considered at this time to be a properly submitted statement. In this regard, the petition containing the statement of unintentional delay is signed by Diallo Kitoko Kitapini, who is one of the two applicants in the above-identified application. Petitioner's attention is directed to 37 CFR 1.33(b), which states.

Amendments and other papers filed in the application must be signed by:

- (1) An attorney or agent of record appointed in compliance with §1.34(b);
- (2) A registered attorney or agent not of record who acts in a representative capacity under the provisions of §1.34(a);
- (3) The assignee of record of the entire interest, if there is an assignee of record of the entire interest;
- (4) An assignee of record of an undivided part interest, and any assignee(s) of the remaining interest and any applicant retaining an interest, if there is an assignee of record of an undivided part interest; or
- (5) **All of the applicants** (§§ 1.42, 1.43 and 1.47) for patent, unless there is an assignee of record of the entire interest and such assignee has taken action in the application in accordance with §§ 3.71 and 3.73. Emphasis added.

An unsigned amendment (or other paper) or one not properly signed by a person having authority to prosecute the application is not entered. This applies, for instance, where the amendment (or other paper) is signed by only one of two applicants and the one signing has not been given a power of attorney by the other applicant.

The record fails to disclose that petitioner herein (Diallo Kitoko Kitapini) was ever given a power of attorney to act on behalf of the other inventor or that he is an assignee of the entire interest and has complied with the provisions of 37 CFR 3.73(b).

37 CFR 3.73(b) provides:

- (1) In order to request or take action in a patent or trademark matter, the assignee must establish its ownership of the patent or trademark property of paragraph (a) of this section to the satisfaction of the Director. The establishment of ownership by the assignee may be combined with the paper that requests or takes the action. Ownership is established by submitting to the Office a signed statement identifying the assignee, accompanied by either:
 - (i) Documentary evidence of a chain of title from the original owner to the assignee (e.g., copy of an executed assignment * * * For patent matters only, the submission of the documentary evidence must be accompanied by a statement affirming that the documentary

evidence of the chain of title from the original owner to the assignee was or concurrently is being submitted for recordation pursuant to § 3.11; or

(ii) A statement specifying where documentary evidence of a chain of title from the original owner to the assignee is recorded in the assignment records of the Office (e.g., reel and frame number).

(2) The submission establishing ownership must show that the person signing the submission is a person authorized to act on behalf of the assignee by:

(i) Including a statement that the person signing the submission is authorized to act on behalf of the assignee; or

(ii) Being signed by a person having apparent authority to sign on behalf of the assignee, e.g., an officer of the assignee.

Further, there are three periods to be considered during the evaluation of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b):

(1) the delay in reply that originally resulted in the abandonment;

(2) the delay in filing an initial petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive the application; and

(3) the delay in filing a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive the application.

Currently, the delay has not been shown to the satisfaction of the Director to be unintentional for periods (1) and (2).

As to Period (1):

The patent statute at 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) authorizes the Director to revive an "unintentionally abandoned application." The legislative history of Public Law 97-247 reveals that the purpose of 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) is to permit the Office to have more discretion than in 35 U.S.C. §§ 133 or 151 to revive abandoned applications in appropriate circumstances, but places a limit on this discretion, stating that "[u]nder this section a petition accompanied by either a fee of \$500 or a fee of \$50 **would not be granted where the abandonment** or the failure to pay the fee for issuing the patent **was intentional** as opposed to being unintentional or unavoidable." [emphasis added]. See H.R. Rep. No. 542, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. 6-7 (1982), *reprinted in* 1982 U.S.C.C.A.N. 770-71. The revival of an intentionally abandoned application is antithetical to the meaning and intent of the statute and regulation.

35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) authorizes the Director to accept a petition "for the revival of an unintentionally abandoned application for a patent." As amended December 1, 1997, 37 CFR

1.137(b)(3) provides that a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by a statement that the delay was unintentional, but provides that "[t]he Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional." Where, as here, there is a question whether the initial delay was unintentional, the petitioner must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unintentional within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) and 37 CFR 1.137(b). *See In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989); 37 CFR 1.137(b). Here, in view of the inordinate delay (over two (2) years) in resuming prosecution, there is a question whether the entire delay was unintentional. Petitioner should note that the issue is not whether some of the delay was unintentional by any party; rather, the issue is whether the entire delay has been shown to the satisfaction of the Director to be unintentional.

The question under 37 CFR 1.137(b) for period (1) is whether the delay on the part of the party having the right or authority to reply to avoid abandonment (or not reply) was unintentional. Accordingly, any renewed petition must clearly identify the party having the right to reply to avoid abandonment on November 27, 2004. That party, in turn must explain what effort(s) was made to further reply to the outstanding Office action and, further, why no reply was filed. If no effort was made to further reply, then that party must explain why the delay in this application does not result from a deliberate course of action (or inaction). Statements are required from any and all responsible person(s) having firsthand knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the lack of a reply to the outstanding Office action. As the courts have made clear, it is pointless for the USPTO to revive a long abandoned application without an adequate showing that the delay did not result from a deliberate course of action. *See Lawman Armor v. Simon*, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 10843, 74 USPQ2d 1633 (DC EMich 2005); *Field Hybrids, LLC v. Toyota Motor Corp.*, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1159 (D. Minn Jan. 27, 2005); *Lumenyte Int'l Corp. v. Cable Lite Corp.*, Nos. 96-1011, 96-1077, 1996 U.S. App. LEXIS 16400, 1996 WL 383927 (Fed. Cir. July 9, 1996) (unpublished) (patents held unenforceable due to a finding of inequitable conduct in submitting an inappropriate statement that the abandonment was unintentional).

As to Period (2):

Likewise, where the applicant deliberately chooses not to seek or persist in seeking the revival of an abandoned application, or where the applicant deliberately chooses to delay seeking the revival of an abandoned application, the resulting delay in seeking revival of the abandoned application cannot be considered as "unintentional" within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(b). *See* MPEP 711.03(c).

The language of both 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) and 37 CFR 1.137(b) are clear and unambiguous, and, furthermore, without qualification. That is, the delay in filing the reply during prosecution, as well as in filing the petition seeking revival, must have been, without qualification, "unintentional" for the reply to now be accepted on petition. The Office requires that the entire delay be at least unintentional as a prerequisite to revival of an abandoned application to prevent abuse and injury to the public. *See* H.R. Rep. No. 542, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. 7 (1982), reprinted in

1982 U.S.C.C.A.N. 771 ("[i]n order to prevent abuse and injury to the public the Commissioner . . . could require applicants to act promptly after becoming aware of the abandonment"). The December 1997 change to 37 CFR 1.137 did not create any new right to overcome an intentional delay in seeking revival, or in renewing an attempt at seeking revival, of an abandoned application. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. 53131, 53160 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 63, 87 (October 21, 1997), which clearly stated that any protracted delay (here, over two (2) years) could trigger, as here, a request for additional information. As the courts have since made clear, a protracted delay in seeking revival, as here, requires a petitioner's detailed explanation seeking to excuse the delay as opposed to USPTO acceptance of a general allegation of unintentional delay. See Lawman Armor v. Simon, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 10843, 74 USPQ2d 1633, at 1637-8 (DC EMich 2005); Field Hybrids, LLC v. Toyota Motor Corp., 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1159 (D. Minn Jan. 27, 2005) at *21-*23. Statements are required from any and all responsible person(s) having firsthand knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the protracted delay, after the abandonment date, in seeking revival.

As noted in MPEP 711.03(c)(II), subsection D, in instances in which such petition was not filed within 1 year of the date of abandonment of the application, applicants should include:

- (A) the date that the applicant first became aware of the abandonment of the application; and
- (B) a showing as to how the delay in discovering the abandoned status of the application occurred despite the exercise of due care or diligence on the part of the applicant.

In either instance, applicant's failure to carry the burden of proof to establish that the "entire" delay was "unavoidable" or "unintentional" may lead to the denial of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), regardless of the circumstances that originally resulted in the abandonment of the application. See also New York University v. Autodesk, 2007 U.S. DIST LEXIS, U.S. District LEXIS 50832, *10 -*12 (S.D.N.Y. 2007)(protracted delay in seeking revival undercuts assertion of unintentional delay).

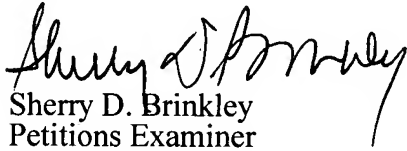
Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop PETITION
 Commissioner for Patents
 Post Office Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By hand: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
 Customer Service Window, Mail Stop PETITION
 Randolph Building
 401 Dulany Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314

The centralized facsimile number is (571) 273-8300.

Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3204.



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